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POTATOES -- GROW 'EM AND CONSERVE 'EM

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Department of Agriculture

Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman and Wallace Kadderly in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, March 25, 1943, over stations stations with the Blue Network.

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KADDERLY: Ruth, did you notice what the Crop Reporting Board said about Irish potatoes, in the "intentions to plant" report last Friday?

VAN DEMAN: I certainly did, Wallace. The report showed farmers on March first intended to plant 13 and a half percent more land to potatoes than they planted last year.

KADDERLY: But the report also showed something less encouraging.

VAN DEMAN: That even the big increase planned is not as big as the goals called for.

KADDERLY: Right. Unless farmers plant more than the report showed they intended on March first, they'll fall short of the goal by 85 thousand 790 acres. That's not a big percentage of their goals of more than 3 and a quarter million acres... but still it represents a lot of spuds that we need.

VAN DEMAN: We realize that, especially since consumers have had to cut down on canned food and have become more interested in potatoes.

KADDERLY: The time is certainly past when we can treat potatoes like....like.... well, like something to waste.

VAN DEMAN: That time certainly is past; in fact, it always was foolish to waste the food value of potatoes as we did.

KADDERLY: By peeling too deep and so on.

VAN DEMAN: Well, you lose food value by peeling at all....to say nothing of peeling too deep.

KADDERLY: Ruth, in just a minute, I'm going to ask you to tell how we can get the most food value from our potatoes. But let's stick to the production problem a little bit longer. You know, last year with very good weather and improved seed, the growers of Irish potatoes turned out a tremendous crop. In making plans to increase their acreage again this year, some of them, I'm sure, have wondered whether we'd actually need more. But with each passing day, it becomes more clear that we do. That in itself has probably caused some growers to plan a bigger increase since they expressed their intentions on March first.

However, some growers also may wonder whether they can get enough for their potatoes to make up for the extra cost of growing more. As things stand now, the farmer is sure of at least 92 percent of parity if he plants at least 90 percent of his farm's potato goal. The Department is trying to find ways to assure the farmer a better return, but there's nothing new to announce today.

"(over)"

As to credit...growers can get plenty of that. As to fertilizer...every potato grower is entitled to all the fertilizer deemed necessary by his State Agricultural Experiment Station. The Department is trying to see that the fertilizer supplies are available locally.

All things considered, the Department of Agriculture War Boards in the counties think they can find a good many potato growers who will plant a few more acres than they intended on March first.

VAN DEMAN: The extra potatoes will come in handy...I'm sure of that. And I for one believe consumers will take greater care to get full value out of the potatoes they buy.

KADDERLY: By cooking the potatoes in their skins? You were saying that peeling wastes food value.

VAN DEMAN: Especially vitamin C. To get the most Vitamin C and other food value from potatoes, boil them quickly in their jackets. Or if you have a steam pressure cooker, use it to get the potatoes tender quickly...in their jackets.

KADDERLY: What about baking? Isn't that a good way to save food value?

VAN DEMAN: Well, the way vitamin C studies are turning out now, baking isn't so good as boiling or steam pressure cooking. But baking does make potatoes taste good.

KADDERLY: Well! So does frying.

VAN DEMAN: Yes, but alas! Vitamin C fairly scampers away when frying begins. In fact, the more you fry...or mash...or whip and otherwise doll up potatoes, the less vitamin C you have. But if you must have mashed potatoes, the most vitamin-saving way to have them is this: cook them in their jackets, skin 'em, mash, add the hot milk and seasoning, and don't whip over-much. Of course, if we're really in earnest about getting full food value, we'll eat skin and all.

KADDERLY: At any rate, there's something for both consumers and growers to do to make sure we have plenty of potatoes this year.

And homemakers if you want more information on ways to get full food value from potatoes, address a card to the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Just ask for the potato leaflet.